

VOTE - Voter Outreach Through Education
Washington Secretary of State

**WASHINGTON STATE CURRICULUM GRADES 8-12
STUDENT HANDOUT, LESSON 1 - INTRODUCTION (A)**

THEME: BALLOTS, POLLS & VOTING BOOTHS

"The hottest places in Hades are reserved for those who, in times of great moral crisis, remain neutral." (Dante)

To cast a vote on an issue or for a candidate is to take a position; it is not to remain neutral. If you are similar to most others who have not yet voted due to age, the terms "ballot", "polling place" and "voting booth" are not unfamiliar. You have probably heard and read of these things in the news and in civics and history classes. However, you may not yet have a clear mental picture of what it would feel like to cast YOUR ballot, enter a polling place or step into the voting booth for the first time.

Few could imagine several decades ago that the nature of voting would change in so many ways. In so many ways but one: it is still a personal decision; it still takes a commitment; it still depends on YOU, on each citizen, to make democracy work. This role of the individual in renewing the marvel that began in our 1787 Constitution cannot be altered no matter how the process of voting changes.

This activity is intended to give you a clearer picture of what a ballot can look like, in the past and present. It will acquaint you with the variety of polling places and voting booths, in the U.S. and elsewhere. It is hoped that familiarization will lead you to be more comfortable with the election process and then to exercise your political right and vote as soon as you are 18 years old.

You will notice that we as a democracy have a common bond with many nations and people, which is the profoundly powerful desire and power to influence our futures through the act of voting. You will also encounter the changes to the voting process, all designed to make the act of voting more available and the results more reliable.

This activity is in two parts and employs both a visual investigation and a written analysis. Because of the page size, they are broken into two separate parts, below:

[Activity 1 \(B\)](#)

[Activity 2 \(C\)](#)